GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:121
ANSWERED ON:02.02.2017
Empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions
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Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

a) whether Constitution 73rd Amendment Act 1992 brought about major changes in Panchayati Raj System;
b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Union Government in pursuance thereof;
c) whether in 12th five year plan Approach Paper the issues have not been addressed and adequate funds were not provided to the Panchayati Raj Institutions by Union Government and the Central Finance Commission and if so, the details thereof; and
d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Union Government to ensure that Panchayati Raj Institutions are strengthened for holistic development of villages and are empowered to have greater say in their day to day functioning?

Answer

(a)& (b): The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (73rd CAA), 1992 incorporated as Part IX in the Constitution has rendered Constitutional Status to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The Constitution of India recognizes Panchayats as 'Institutions of local self-government'. 'Panchayats' being 'Local Bodies' is a State subject mandated under Part IX and List II (State List) of Seventh Schedule (Article 246) of the Constitution of India. Mandatory provisions under Part IX of the Constitution incorporated by the 73rd Amendment which include three tiers of Panchayats, direct election to seats at all three tiers of Panchayats and indirect elections to offices of chairpersons of Block and District Panchayats, reservations in seats and offices for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and women, rotation of reserved seats and offices of chairpersons and setting up of State Election Commissions and holding elections to Panchayats every five years have been implemented by all the States except delay in holding of timely elections in the Union Territory of Puducherry and in constitution of State Finance Commissions in some States. Article 243G of Part IX of the Constitution allows discretion to State Legislatures to endow, to the Panchayats with powers and authority to enable them to function as institutions of local self-governance. The implementation of the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution is reviewed by MoPR from time to time through studies and discussions with States.

(c) & (d): 12th Five Year Plan (FYP) Approach Paper delved into the challenge that requires greater attention to ensure better implementation, improved accountability and impetus to several programmes aimed at building rural and urban infrastructure and providing basic services with the objective of increasing inclusiveness and reducing poverty. Accordingly, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has been taking several steps to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the States and Union Territories covered under Part IX of the Constitution through provisioning of financial and technical assistance for capacity building of Panchayati Raj Institutions, including Elected Representatives (ERs), so that they can effectively discharge their assigned functions. Under the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) for the period 2015-20, grants to the tune of Rs. 2,00,292.20 crore are being devolved to Gram Panchayats constituted under Part IX of the Constitution, for delivering basic services, technical & administrative support towards operations and maintenance, creation of reliable data base of local bodies' receipts & expenditure through audited accounts and for improvement of own source revenue of the Gram Panchayats.
MoPR also incentivises the states which have devolved more functions, funds and functionaries to the Panchayats. The states are regularly assisted through issue of advisories, and for preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans by the Gram Panchayats for effective development.